November 28, 1997
(Justice)

The following statement was issued today by Chris Decker, Minister of Justice. It was also read in the House of Assembly:

Six years ago, a handful of men in Ontario and Quebec decided that a white ribbon - worn during the week leading up to the anniversary of the massacre of 14 women at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique - would be a symbol of men's opposition to men's violence against women. Since then, the White Ribbon Campaign has spread across Canada and also to the United States, Australia, Europe and Central America.

Today is the official launch date for the 1997 White Ribbon Campaign which runs until December 6.

I am wearing a white ribbon as a personal pledge that I will not commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women. I have encouraged my honourable colleagues to make this same commitment. My female colleagues are wearing purple ribbons which is the colour normally designated for anti-violence.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has made a commitment through the five-year action plan of the Provincial Strategy Against Violence to work in collaboration with the community to decrease violence. The vision is that the people of this province will live in safe, caring communities where there is an inherent respect for each other, and where violence is unacceptable.

In order to achieve this vision for our society, both men and women will need to work in partnership. Julie Bettney, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, will be providing you with an update on initiatives under the Provincial Strategy and activities surrounding December 6 in a statement next Friday.

While the White Ribbon Campaign remains dedicated to the notion that reaching men and boys with a message of non-violence is key to a long term solution, they understand that supporting women's organizations must also be a priority.

This fall, the White Ribbon Campaign, with the support of trade unions, schools, universities, municipalities and community groups across Canada is, for the first time, raising money for women's anti-violence programs on a national basis in an organized fashion. The campaign continues to encourage fundraising for women's shelters, rape crisis centres and transition houses in their communities.

I am pleased to commend the White Ribbon Campaign for the support of my colleagues, and reaffirm my administration's commitment to addressing violence.

1997 11 28 10:10 a.m.

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